

What is wrong with that picture? This is a decision by President Bush to invade before the inspections were completed, before the U.N. had an opportunity to join us, to invade before the facts were in. The invasion took place and our military did its best. They are the best in the world. They conquered Saddam Hussein, but they left us in a position of vulnerability, with no end in sight. That is the choice facing American voters on November 2.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE REFORM ACT OF 2004

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2845, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2845) to reform the intelligence community and the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the U.S. Government, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McCain amendment No. 3702, to add title VII of S. 2774, 9/11 Commission Report Implementation Act, related to transportation security.

Wyden amendment No. 3704, to establish an Independent National Security Classification Board in the executive branch.

Collins amendment No. 3705, to provide for homeland security grant coordination and simplification.

AMENDMENT NO. 3705

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, last evening, on behalf of myself, Senator CARPER, and Senator LIEBERMAN, I offered an amendment to rewrite the formula for the Homeland Security Grant Program. The amendment we brought before the Senate was unanimously reported as a separate bill by the Governmental Affairs Committee.

We should always keep in mind that should there be another terrorist attack on our country, people will be calling 911; they will not be calling the Washington, DC, area code. It is our first responders—our firefighters, our police officers, our emergency medical personnel—who are always on the scene first. We know that from the tragic attacks of 9/11, and, as Secretary Ridge has pointed out many times, homeland security starts with the security of our hometowns. For this reason, we have come together in a bipar-

tisan way, representing large States and small States, to draft the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act, and we have offered it as an amendment to this bill. It would streamline and strengthen the assistance we provide to our States, communities, and first responders who protect our homeland.

The underlying Homeland Security Act contains virtually no guidance on how the Department of Homeland Security is to assist State and local governments with their homeland security needs. In fact, the 187-page Homeland Security Act mentions the issue of grants to first responders in but a single paragraph. The decisions on how Federal dollars should be spent or how much money should be allocated to home were left to another day when Congress enacted that important legislation, but it is now time for Congress to finally address this critical issue.

We know that much of the burden for homeland security has fallen on the shoulders of State and local officials across America, those who are truly on the front lines. In crafting the amendment before us, the Governmental Affairs Committee listened first and foremost to our first responders. We held three hearings on this vital topic and negotiated for 2 years to produce the amendment that Senator CARPER, Senator LIEBERMAN, and I are offering. The bipartisan measure was approved by the Governmental Affairs Committee by a 16-to-0 vote, and it currently has 29 cosponsors, including the distinguished Presiding Officer.

There are several groups that are active with first responders who are supporting our legislation. They include the National Governor's Association, Advocates for EMS, National Council of State Legislators, Council of State Governments, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and the Fraternal Order of Police.

As you can see, Mr. President, our approach has widespread support. It is supported by Senators from big States, such as Michigan and Ohio—and I want to particularly commend the Senators from those States for their hard work on this legislation—and small States, such as my home State of Maine and the State of the Senator from Delaware.

The wide breadth of support demonstrates the balanced approach our amendment takes to homeland security funding. It recognizes that threat-based funding is a critical part of homeland security funding. It does so by almost tripling the homeland security funding awarded based on threat and risk. This has been a particular concern to Senator CLINTON, who has brought this issue before the Senate a couple of times.

The amendment, however, also recognizes that first responders in each and every State are on the front lines and have needs. Therefore, the bill maintains a minimum allocation for each State.

The legislation will also improve the coordination and the administration of homeland security funding by promoting one-stop shopping for homeland security funding opportunities. It establishes a clearinghouse to assist first responders and State and local governments in accessing homeland security grant information and other resources within the new department. This clearinghouse will help improve access to information, coordinate technical assistance for vulnerability and threat assessments, provide information regarding homeland security best practices, and compile information regarding homeland security equipment purchased with Federal funds.

Establishment of these improvements will mean first responders can spend more time training to save lives and less time filling out unnecessary paperwork.

This amendment will establish a fair and balanced approach to allocating this critical funding. I am very pleased to have worked with the Senator from Delaware on this and I yield to him for any comments he might have, unless, of course, the ranking member would like to speak first.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the recognition. Senator COLLINS and I have to go a short walk to a meeting, so I take this opportunity and use it briefly to rise in support of the Collins-Carper amendment submitted by the chairman of the committee and the distinguished Senator from Delaware, who worked very hard on this very important topic and area before the 9/11 Commission Report was assigned to the Governmental Affairs Committee.

This is an important addition to the National Intelligence Reform Act, the underlying proposal that came out of our committee last week, because it would help ensure that in these dangerous times the needs of our States and local first responders are met in a reasonable and coordinated way.

In the past 3 years since September 11, beginning on September 11, our first responders and preventers have made real progress in boosting America's preparedness to deal with the threat of terrorism. But as an independent task force of the Council on Foreign Relations found last year: the United States has not reached a sufficient national level of emergency preparedness and remains dangerously unprepared to handle catastrophic attack on American soil—dangerously unprepared. That I take to refer particularly not to the law enforcers, who are the first preventers, but to the capacity of our total response system at the local and State level to respond to a catastrophic attack.

This amendment, unanimously approved by a total nonpartisan vote in our committee, is an important first step in ensuring that our local first responders get the resources they need.